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226 463 [829] race apart, although in reality they differ from other Bemba merely in regard to their fixed habitation, greater degree of intermarriage, and independence of their neighbours. It will be best to sketch fishing methods in general as they are practised all over the country, and then to describe the more complex type of occupation characteristic of these riverine villages.

221 226 Bemba methods of fishing, whether by trapping, netting, or poisoning, are only successful in shallow waters. For this reason fish are only caught easily during two seasons of the year: (*a*) *April and May*, i.e. at the end of the rains when the waters are falling on the flats and banks, and the fish may be caught returning to the big rivers from the smaller streams and backwaters, where they had gone to breed a few months earlier. (*b*) *September to November*, i.e. when the level of the water in the rivers has fallen to its lowest and trapping or netting is possible in the main body of the stream, and poison can be used in the smaller rivers. Fish may also be caught sometimes on their way upstream to breed in January or February. But in a river as big as the Chambesi fishing of one kind or another is practised all the year round.

The natives recognize no close season for breeding. Questioned as to why they wish to trap fish that are full of eggs or young fish that are undersized, they answer in some such terms as, 'Well, it is no use leaving the fish for some one else to catch, is it?'

(*a*) *Methods.*

226 [278] 824 1. *Fish poisoning.* The simplest method of catching fish is by the use of a stupefying poison known as *ububa*, which is obtained from the crushed leaves of a bushy plant (*Tephrosia*) cultivated especially for the purpose in any village near a stream.[1] Fish poisoning (*ukusungilo buba*) is a co-operative activity in which the whole village, men, women, and children, join, and which is quite unskilled. The whole village may go out together under the orders of the headman, or a group of villagers may plan their own expedition. The best time of year for such fishing is August to November, when the waters are at their lowest.[2] On the smaller rivers such fishing parties are

[1] Mr. E. B. H. Goodall in *Some Wemba Words*, 1921, states that *buba* is used as a collective term to cover all forms of fish poison collected from various roots and leaves, including the cultivated plant, *kowamushi*, and different forest trees and shrubs, but I only heard the name used for the former.

[2] I have known natives try to fish by this method much earlier, i.e. in July and August, but this will depend on the height of the water.

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magicians already described. Both are known as *ifibinda*. But naturally these specialist hunters are not common nowadays, since game restrictions prevent the killing of elephants—formerly their chief pursuit.

Every form of hunting has magic rites connected with it. Each hunter or setter of traps has his own charms (*ubwanga*) designed to make himself invisible, to draw the game to him, to slow its power of movement, &c. The animals themselves are thought to have magic attributes. Parts of their skin or bones are used as activating principles (*ifishimba*) in many charms or medicines, and many of them can only be hunted or killed after special ritual precautions have been taken to protect the hunter. All animals that attack or kill mankind are grouped in a special class known as *ifiswanga* (sing. *iciswanga*). These include the lion, leopard, cheetah, crocodile, hyena, or poisonous snakes, &c., and all these species are considered to have magic properties and to require ritual handling. Other animals are described as being *ifibanda* (sing. *icibanda*) or haunting spirits, or else are thought to turn into *ifibanda* when killed, and they are feared on that account. The bush-pig, bush-buck, hippo, rhino, eland and ant-bear are all *ifibanda*. Akin are the unlucky animals, e.g. those with the bottom teeth projecting or appearing first (*icinkula*, plur. *ifinkula*)[1] such as the zebra, the eland, haartebeest, or buffalo, which have no upper teeth in the middle of the jaw; the night owl (*ntiti mushi*) or the wild cat. None of these animals may be taken as tribute to a chief or eaten by a pregnant woman.

After killing one of the *ifiswanga* or *ifibanda*, the hunter must purify himself for fear the spirit of the animal will pursue him in dreams, bring him ill luck, or send him mad. This is also true of the elephant. The purification of a lion killer takes place at the chief's court and hereditary officials, the *Bamushika* (Kasenge and Cikutwe at Citimukulu's court), alone have the medicine required to wash the hunter.[2] But less elaborate rites are performed in the case of the leopard, crocodile, the caracal, and a bull eland with thick black tufts on its head. The ceremonies necessary after the killing of an elephant are described below.

[1] Children whose bottom teeth come through first are considered unlucky and are put to death.

[2] The *malaila* or war-song is also sung. I am indebted to Mr. T. Fox-Pitt and Mr. V. Brelsford for much confirmatory information on the magic properties of different animals.

769 Spirits are also worshipped, as has been mentioned, at the chiefs' relic huts, at the sites of dead chiefs' villages, which are revered as 778 spirit centres, and at remarkable natural objects such as caves and waterfalls (*ngulu*) which are also thought to be spirit centres. Major chiefs are buried in a sacred grove guarded with great care by a priest, the [782] *shimwalule*. This is the home of the most powerful tribal spirits and an animal used to be sacrificed here on the rare occasions when drought was [787] threatened. The spirits of the chiefs also manifest themselves in the presence of possessed men and women who prophesy and heal. Ancestral spirits are approached by the man or woman who has succeeded to their name and guardian spirit, that is to say, the head of a small local lineage, a headman or a chief.

769 Ancestral spirits are addressed after a ritual sex act between the 782 officiant and his wife, followed by ceremonial purification. The spirits 783 are addressed by name and some form of sacrifice, e.g. beer, cloth, flour and chickens, is offered to them.

(c) MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT

789 Bemba and Bisa believe in the potency of *bwanga* which may be translated as "magic". Bemba magical rites depend for the most part on medicine (*muti*), usually part of a plant or tree, sometimes with the addition of energizing charms giving potency to the medicine. Words are sometimes used but, as with the Azande, there is less insistence on and less importance attached to the spell than to the rite and the medicines. It is the magician (*Ng'anga*) who procures and uses the medicine and from whom it may be purchased. To ensure effectiveness the *Ng'anga* must invoke *Lesa*, without whose consent the medicines are thought to be ineffectual.

Magic is used for general protective purposes - to ensure fertility, good health and luck, to give staying power to food. In the economic sphere magic seems to be used less among the Bemba than the Bisa. Richards suggests that the greater development of the ancestral cult among the former is the reason for this.(1)

754 Magic is also used in divination. The commonest form of divination 787 is the rubbing of an axe over a skin until it sticks in answer to a question, and boiling of medicine in a pot until the mixture bubbles over one side or the other side. Another characteristic form of Bemba divination is the hunting ritual used to ascertain the cause of a person's death, according to whether a male or female animal is first driven into the hunting nets. This rite can be used as a preliminary test for witchcraft. In the old days the *lilemfo*, or war fetish, originally obtained from the Lunda chiefs near Lake Mweru was employed. This was a horn placed on a spike which was [278] thought only to work if smeared with the blood of a human victim. *Mwafi*, the poison used as a test for witchcraft from the Southern Sudan to Southern Rhodesia, was used by the senior chiefs in this area.

754 Evil magic, or sorcery, was distinguished as *buloshi*, a term which covers witchcraft, in the sense of inborn power, as well as the manipulation

(1) Richards, 6, 1939, pp.356, 187.

231 encouraged and there are now a few herds in the valley. Horses and mules are lacking. The donkey ridden by Gamitto when he made his entry in 1830 was the first of the species to be seen in the country.(1) The villagers keep poultry and some small stock, mainly goats and sheep.

FISHING

226 Fish abound in the Luapula, the riverside lagoons and Lakes Mweru and Mofwe. Livingstone collected the vernacular names of thirty-nine species caught in Lake Mweru.(2) Some fishing goes on all the year round but the season, when the men move to the fishing camps on the river islands, extends from September to January. In the shallow marshland pools the fish are speared while laying their eggs. In flowing water they are trapped in conical wickerwork baskets set in rocky falls or in the openings in a weir.(3) On Lake Mweru they are caught from canoes with hook and line. On the Luapula the people go out in their dugouts at night and drive the fish into seine-nets (*ubukonde*) by hitting the surface of the water with wooden discs attached to poles.(4) Large-scale fishing is done with [177] drag-nets (*umukwau*) which require several men to pull them. Formerly nets [278] were made by men from barkcloth cord. Nowadays nylon and cotton nets are used. Vegetable poisons and stupefacients, now banned, were employed in the past.

HUNTING

223 Hunting and fowling are spare-time activities. Elephants and buffa-
224 loes, which in Livingstone's time used to be chased into the Mofwe mudflats during the rainy season and killed in great numbers,(5) are no longer found in Kazembe's country though some still remain on the Belgian Congo side.
[411] Large herds of lechwe antelope roam the swamp country beyond the inhabited belt. Fire-arms have displaced the traditional weapons.

DIET

251 The basic foodstuffs are cassava(6) and fish. Game, poultry, fruit
252 and wild bees' honey, supplement the diet. Cassava is soaked in water, peeled and sun-dried for storing. The root, after being pounded and ground
262 on a stone, is made into porridge and flavoured with groundnuts or other
273 relish. Sweet cassava is eaten roasted.(7) Fish is consumed fresh or dried, game fresh or smoked. Fish, when dried in the sun or over a fire, will keep for three months. Water-lily roots, on which, according to tradition, the aboriginal pygmies fed, are considered a delicacy. Native-made alcoholic beverages were millet beer(8) (still made), *Borassus* palm wine, mead(9) and a spirit distilled from maize.(10) Oil is expressed from palm
276 fruit(11) and from groundnuts and vinegar used to be made from bananas.(12) Tobacco is taken as snuff and smoked in pipes.(13) *Bhang* (hemp), was

(1) Burton, op.cit., p.252.
(2) Livingstone, op.cit., p.245.
(3) Brelsford, 2, 1945, pp.70, 71.
(4) Holmes, 1925, p.26.
(5) Livingstone, op.cit., pp.248, 276, 299.
(6) Burton, op.cit., p.40.
(7) ibid., p.101.
(8) ibid., p.43.
(9) Gamitto, II, p.26; Valdez, II, p.246.
(10) Bowdich, p.91.
(11) Livingstone, op.cit., pp.243, 278.
(12) ibid, p.272.
(13) ibid., p.251; Gamitto, I, p.401.